

# The Middle Ages

Towns and cities grew during the Middle Ages as the amount of trade increased in Europe and Asia

## What led to the growth of towns and cities in the Middle ages?

Traders wanted to settle down (beginnings town)

- Tired of going from place to place
- Usually settled near fortress or castle for protection
- Travel was dangerous
- Could only travel during good weather
- Needed easy transportation so settled on or near rivers and major roads

## Who lived in towns (young town)

Second sons, who would not inherit, moved to town for adventure

Peasants paid for their freedom from the castle Lord and moved to town

Priests sent by the Roman Catholic Church

Craftsmen

- Butchers
- Bakers
- Candlemakers

- Blacksmiths
- Shoemakers

As people moved to towns, they built houses, workshops, and churches

More traders would settle in the area and some would move on

What did the people do in the towns? (bulging town)

Protected themselves

- Lived in homes above or behind workshops (homes would get dangerously high)
- Built walls around home and shops and then the city as expansion occurred
- Obtain a town charter
  - Legal document from landowner listing the privileges of townspeople
  - Usually involved paying taxes to Lord
  - Self governing

## **Growth of Trade**

**Rome fell in A.D. 476 stopping trade**

**Trade was very dangerous**

**People had to be self sufficient**

- **Grown own food**
- **Barter if needed something**
  - **Traded goods with neighbor or travelling trader**

## **Where did the merchandise come from?**

**Goods came from far lands**

**Came back with the soldiers who fought in the Crusades**

- **Middle east**
- **Asia**
- **Southern Europe**

**Local goods were traded**

What types of merchandise was produced far away? What types of merchandise was locally produced?

Local goods

Imported goods

Produce	dyes
shoes	silks
candles	spices
meat	

How were goods paid for?

Trade increased

Need for money returned

Moneychangers

- Knew what currencies and the values of what other people were using
- Could change money from different town

Need for banks

- Italian word banca means benches because the moneychangers would sit on benches and conduct business
- Letters of credit
  - A banker would issue a letter saying “so and so has this much money to spend. So and so could then go and spend that much money and the money would come out of his account.
    - Beginnings of modern day checks/checkcards

## Industry and Jobs

With movement to cities and increased trade came class distinctions and guilds for skilled and unskilled laborers.

### Social Classes

- Merchants
- Craftsmen

What is a guild? What was its function?

Guild: organizations of a common craft

**All who did a certain thing banded together for work and social life**

### **Functions of a guild**

- **Set standards**
  - **Quality of work**
  - **Quantity of work (how much could/should be produced)**
  - **Cost (how much price should be)**
- **Protected members**

### **What are the three stages to learning a craft or trade?**

#### **1. Apprentice**

- **Lived and worked with a master craftsman to learn a craft**
- **Was also a servant in the home**
- **Lasted anywhere from 2-10 years**

#### **2. Journeyman**

- **Go out on own to perfect trade by learning from other masters in other towns**

### 3. Master

- After journeyman perfected craft he returned to hometown to prove himself
- Presented best work and if approved would become part of the guild and could then begin to train others

### What was town life like? What role did the church play ?

Guilds were the center of town life

- Members would gather together to celebrate occasion (holidays), socialize, and have guild meetings

Homes were often above shops

- Wealthy might have had separate homes
- Built on bridges and walls of towns
- Everything made of wood so fire's were common
- Limited sanitation so there was lots of sickness and death
  - Black Death

## Religion

- Catholic Church was the dominant church
- Each town had its own cathedral or church
  - New places of worship for time period showed wealth
  - Built in the Romanesque style but toward end of middle ages began showing Gothic style
- Church bells
  - Told time
  - Warned of danger
  - Announced important events